

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-14 without prejudice or disclaimer.

1-14. (Canceled).

15. (Original) A method of assembling a blower wheel, comprising the steps of:

placing a ring and a hub on a first die;

placing a cylindrical blade strip on the ring;

placing a backplate on the cylindrical blade strip, wherein the hub slidingly engages a hole in the backplate;

placing a second die on the backplate and hub;

applying a first compressive axial force to a second die, wherein the ring, cylindrical blade strip, and backplate are generally compressed between the first die and the second die;

applying a rotational force to the first die and the second die, wherein the first and second die are rotatably coupled by a transfer gear assembly;

applying a first radial crimping force on the ring, wherein a first flange of the ring engages a first portion of the cylindrical blade strip;

applying a second radial crimping force on the backplate, whereby a second flange of the backplate engages a second portion of the cylindrical blade strip;

generally stopping the rotation of the first and second die;

applying a second compressive axial force on the second die without removing the first compressive axial force, wherein the hub is generally deformed on one end, thereby engaging the backplate.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of measuring a number of rotations of the first die or the second die.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of measuring the first compressive axial force by a pressure transducer, thereby defining a first measured pressure.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of maintaining the first measured pressure below a first predetermined pressure by adjusting the first compressive axial force.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of measuring the second compressive axial force by a pressure transducer while the second compressive axial force is applied, thereby defining a second measured pressure.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of determining whether the second measured pressure is below a second predetermined pressure, and producing a signal indicating a fault if the second measured pressure is below the second predetermined pressure.

21. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the hub comprises a plurality of lugs which are generally deformed by the second compressive axial force, thereby securing the hub to the backplate.

22. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the hub comprises a generally circular flange which is generally deformed by the second compressive axial force, thereby securing the hub to the backplate.